



Parks & Recreation

Sun Protection Policy Guidelines

Introduction

Skin cancer is considered epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over one million Americans are expected to get skin cancer this year. That's more people than the grand total of all who will get cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, and colon. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight causes 90 percent of all non-melanoma skin cancer. Risk for skin cancer can be greatly reduced when certain precautions are practiced.

It is prudent for park and recreation directors to establish a sun-safety policy to protect staff and patrons from excessive sunlight, and to avoid potential liability and litigation stemming from subsequent blistering sunburns, dehydration, heat illness, and skin cancer. This document is designed to assist administrators as they create sun-protection guidelines for their specific venue and circumstances.

Some statements presented in this sample policy may prove impractical and may need to be modified or totally omitted from the guidelines administrators develop. The goal is to adopt as many of the sun-safety principles and strategies as possible, according to their feasibility. The policy created should cover both recreation activities as well as employee outdoor work duties.

Following are the basic tactics for preventing skin cancer. On the next page the sun-safety tips are translated into guidelines for outdoor activities.

Basic Personal Strategies for Preventing Skin Cancer

1. Reduce exposure to sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (10 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the winter), as practical.
2. Wear full-coverage clothing when outside in sunlight including four-inch full-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and full-length pants (weather permitting).
3. Use sunglasses that state they protect from 99-100 percent of UVA and UVB. A UV-protective coating can be added to prescription glasses.
4. Apply full-spectrum (UVA & UVB) sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater) to exposed skin, 15 minutes before going outside in the sun.
5. Use lip balm with a SPF of 15 or greater.
6. Seek **shade** when outside in the sun.



Cover up!





Suggested Guidelines for Outdoor Work or Recreation

1. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will be scheduled before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m., from March through October. The availability of shade will be considered when planning such activities during these time frames.
2. For all outdoor activities occurring on sunny (non-rainy) days – especially between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – patrons and staff will be encouraged to:
 - A. Work or play in shaded areas, when practical.
 - B. Wear full-coverage clothing that includes:
 - (1) four-inch or more full-brimmed hats that create a shadow which completely covers the head, face, nose, ears, and neck. (Flappy-jacks, patterned somewhat like a baseball hat with neck flaps, may prove a practical solution.)
 - (2) long-sleeved shirts and full-length pants made of tightly woven fabric that is lightweight.
 - C. Wear sunglasses that protect from 99-100 percent of UVA & UVB (full-spectrum).
 - D. Fifteen minutes before going outside, apply a SPF 15 or greater broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB), water-resistant sunscreen to exposed skin. Re-apply sunscreen at least every two hours.
 - E. Use lip balm with a SPF of 15 or greater.
3. A program committee or other appointed group, following an established timetable, will develop and implement a plan to place trees and/or construct shelters that provide shade for protecting people who engage in outdoor activities occurring at (site name). (Note: In most cases, the preferred location for providing shade will be along or in close proximity to the borders of recognized recreation areas or sports fields. This will allow patrons and staff to easily access shade when they are not actively participating in the activities.)
4. Parents or guardians will be encouraged verbally and through written communications to provide the above described (choose...) hat, full-length clothing, dark glasses, lip balm, and sunscreen.
5. Sun-protection training and materials will be provided to staff and patrons encouraging them to practice sun safety while participating in P & R activities/job duties or engaging in outdoor pastimes.
6. While on duty, staff are encouraged to practice sun-safety principles/strategies to protect themselves and serve as good role models for patrons, especially children.
7. These guidelines will be communicated and reinforced to staff and patrons through verbal reminders, posters, signs, pamphlets, notices, newsletters, and meetings, etc., and above all, on-site PRACTICE.
8. Safety staff will conduct an annual review of the sun-safety policy and the degree to which employees practice skin cancer prevention behaviors.



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Additional Skin Cancer Prevention Resources

1. UV Index: The UV Index predicts the concentration of ultraviolet radiation that will hit the indicated zip code area on a given day. The higher the number, the stronger UV rays will be. This index can be daily communicated to outdoor workers to remind them to take sun-protection precautions. To locate the UV Index, go to _____

Then:

- A. Input the desired 5-digit zip code
- B. Click on “UV Index”
- C. Click on “Submit”

An interpretive chart will explain the significance of the generated number.

2. OSHA provides an on-line pocket card entitled, “Protecting Yourself in the Sun.” Download at _____



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